

**“Soldier Safety”**  
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The one thing that we as soldiers keep in back of our minds during every facing movement, every range, during every combat mission, is the welfare of ourselves and most importantly, each other. The most vital key to accomplishing every mission, tactically and professionally consists of a common tool we practice with on a daily basis. Safety! This six letter word is practiced from every lower enlisted soldier all the way up to every senior commissioned officer. It is a concept that has become common knowledge as well as common sense. Today’s exercise of safety in the Army has become a direct reflection of what every soldier is expected of as a professional and warrior. I strongly believe that everyone is a safety but it is highly stressed and enforced by the leader, the Noncommissioned Officer.

From every soldier’s manual of common tasks, to each FM 6-22 the Army instills into us the importance of safety. Safety cannot be ignored. For every soldier deployed to a combat theater must depend on safety as his /her tactic to accomplishing the given task and/ or mission. No matter where you may be, or whether your MOS may be 11B or 42A, safety is a common knowledge passed through the ranks. It begins from the moment you fall in for morning PT formation and follows all the way past evening chow. As a leader it is important to remember that safety comes first with every given order, task, and mission. The Army has set guidelines for soldiers to instill and practice safety as a common task but in all actuality it is common sense that every service member should

live by. As a soldier it is important to practice safety for every PT session, range, detail, or whatever the task at hand may be. It begins with the proper uniform, and gear depending on the mission and risk assessment. If you take one minute to think about everything you do to be safe you would certainly discover that safety is the key to accomplishing the mission. From eye protection, ear plugs, reflective belts, proper gloves, the correct footwear, suitable headgear, etc., we remind ourselves as professionals that it is necessary and extremely vital to be safe.

It doesn't take much to jeopardize the mission at hand. Even if it was one soldier who was being unsafe, that one soldier has affected the mission in a way that may set it incapable of accomplishment. That is why as leaders, Noncommissioned Officers, we repeat it over and over until it becomes the standard. You may not notice at times when you practice safety because we practice and perform our safety measures on a daily basis. Every task we perform whether it may be a simple PMCS, a PMI, PCI, etc., has a safety standard we must follow in order to ensure the welfare of our officers, and enlisted soldiers. Whatever the mission is, safety comes first and should follow to the end. From properly buckling a vehicle safety belt to performing a correct push-up during PT, safety is and will remain a word that certainly describes a soldier's values and ethos. Every soldier knows that in order to complete the mission and accomplish the objective as an expert and professional, safety measures must be involved and used. It starts with the NCO as the soldier who has the ability to set standards and guidelines for every one to follow. Ultimately, safety leads the mission alongside with the Noncommissioned Officer.

I have learned a great deal on safety throughout my own personal experiences and cannot be anymore persistent on how important the concept is to a soldier. As a young Private in the Army at the age of 18, I was deployed in support of OIF in March 2003, and only after seven days into the initial invasion, I found myself in a forward field surgical tent after being wounded by enemy sniper fire. Now after four years, I find myself in a leadership position, in charge of the welfare of my troops. I can't dwell on the past but I can ask myself questions for today. As a leader how can I ensure the safety of my soldiers in a combat environment? Are we prepared for this mission? How is troop morale? How can I prevent an accident or injury? Without simple questions and safety measures, controls, our actions can lead into harmful or even fatal mistakes. Safety for many may be merely a word that seems to be repetitive at the work area, but it is highly enforced in order to remind our selves that we as a country and military force are engaged in war on terrorism. It is crucial as leaders and soldiers to maintain our selves as professionals in what we do. To set the standard, the standard of being safe, working safe, and living safely. We remind ourselves through training, classes, and rehearsal that safety leads to successfully accomplishing the mission and most importantly the key to "bringing everyone home safe!"